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ABSTRACT

Focusing on recent trends in Chinese Taipei, this paper analyzes ways in which adult education policies may be used to establish a successful and permanent foundation for lifelong learning. First, political, social, and educational dimensions of life in Chinese Taipei are examined, highlighting a major weakness in the field of adult education due to little or unproductive collaboration between providers. Next, the government's adult education policies are analyzed, focusing on 1992's Five Year Scheme, which laid the foundation for raising the standards of adult educational practices and lifelong learning; 1996's Lifelong Learning Oriented Middle Stage Adult Education Development Scheme, emphasizing programming and implementation of the Five Year Scheme; and Whole Construction of Community, a cultural policy package designed to establish a systematic learning society in the country. The following four strategies to strengthen adult education are then presented: (1) bridge the gap between policy and practice by developing a needs assessment tool to determine present demands and reveal future trends; (2) increase multiple participation in policy making by involving participants, providers, and other government departments; (3) balance descriptive and prescriptive demands; and (4) improve program evaluation through multiple, inter-, and intra-departmental assessment. Finally, adult education and lifelong learning in Chinese Taipei and other economies are discussed. Contains 18 references. (TGI)

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Cheng-Yen Wang

In: Lifelong Learning: Policies, Practices, and Programs

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JC 970 402

Advancing Lifelong Learning through Adult Education Policy in Chinese Taipei

by Cheng-Yen Wang

Lifelong learning has had a brief but already interesting chronology in Chinese Taipei; now it is poised for a period of major development. Adult education, which is positioned to be the major foundation for the development of lifelong learning in Chinese Taipei, is a key element in this educational development. This paper describes and analyzes the two main policy packages in Chinese Taipei which have shaped and are continuing to shape adult education, and at the same time describes how lifelong learning is expected to flower from the second of these. The paper also makes recommendations for enriching adult education policy-making, a key influence for lifelong learning practice. These ideas and recommendations may be useful for other APEC member economies, particularly those economies which are in the process of strengthening their educational policy-making capability and developing their adult education and lifelong learning programming.

INTRODUCTION

Lifelong learning, defined as learning throughout the lifespan, is a concept which is familiar to most Chinese. In fact, many well-known Chinese proverbs have encouraged lifelong learning for thousands of years. The most familiar are: "to learn as long as to live" and "learning has no boundaries." The notions implied in these two proverbs incorporate a variety of lifelong learning related terms such as lifetime learning, life-wide learning, and lifespan learning. The central theme, of course, is that learning must continue as long as a person lives. These Chinese proverbs, however, did not have significant modern educational and psychological import until the arrival of adult education. Since then, the proverbs have paved the way for developing adult education and lifelong learning in modern Chinese Taipei. Most of Chinese Taipei's people are familiar with these proverbs, and they can be employed as a starting point to understand lifelong learning and adult education.

During the past half decade in Chinese Taipei, programs which extend an individual's learning opportunities throughout the lifespan have had an excellent opportunity to grow. However, prior to that time, and in comparison with most developed economies, Chinese Taipei's adult education programming was conducted mostly in non-formal settings and styles, and the term, adult education, was not familiar to the public. Currently, formal adult education is offered mainly through

distance education institutes and supplementary schools which are attached to secondary and primary schools.

In order to stimulate adult education, Chinese Taipei formulated the "Develop and Improve Adult Education Five Year Scheme" (Five Year Scheme), employing it from 1992 through to June, 1996. It was then followed by a new scheme called the "Lifelong Learning-Oriented Middle Stage Adult Education Development Scheme" (LLDS). It was as a result of the Five Year Scheme that adult education policy and practices began to be taken seriously and grow systematically within Chinese Taipei. With regard to community-based adult education, a strong contribution came from President Lee Tein-Hui when he stressed the importance of cultivating community consciousness, expanding community culture, and promoting the idea of "commonality of life". President Lee's emphasis on community inspired the policy, "The Whole Construction of Community" (WCC), implemented by the Council for Cultural Affairs. These policies gave adult education, which has been the mother of lifelong learning in Chinese Taipei, the opportunity to develop both in stature and effectiveness.

Official policies act as guidelines for administration. Successful policies steer and direct the administration, and result in change. Policies within Chinese Taipei that relate to adult education and lifelong learning have detailed prescriptive expectations as well as descriptive phenomenon. In the next few pages, this paper analyzes ways in which adult education policies may be used to establish a successful and permanent foundation for lifelong learning within the Chinese Taipei context. This analysis may be helpful for policy makers in other APEC economies, especially those who are involved with adult education programs that are evolving into lifelong learning practices.

A CHANGING SOCIETY

Society in Chinese Taipei has been changing quite dramatically. This change, which has taken place in a relatively short period of time, has been called "The Quiet Revolution". Revolution implies rapid change, and this pace has been witnessed in the political, economic, social, and educational dimensions of life.

Political Dimension

After revoking Martial Law in 1986, politics in Chinese Taipei changed perceptibly. Shifts included the liberation of political organisations, the wide availability of newspapers and other publications, and direct election of the Executive. Some expected reforms are yet to come, including amendments to the Constitution.

Also during this period, new political parties were organized. The three main political parties, the Kaomintom (KMT), the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and the New Party (NP), have enlarged the democratic process of policy formation, thereby reflecting different demands from various groups. For example, the DPP emphasizes the grassroots culture which has indirectly facilitated the growth of adult education. Political shifts are fundamental to other changes, including educational reform, as each of the three political parties develop and expand policy agendas.

Economic Dimension

During the past decade, Chinese Taipei has faced increasing economic pressure as it competes in global markets. Since the 1970s, Chinese Taipei has enjoyed a dynamic economic history, earning itself the well-deserved title of "Little Tiger". Low-skill manufacturing has, however, during the past few years gradually moved in significant measure to other developing economies, including the new Little Tigers such as Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines. As a result, Chinese Taipei's current economic development lags slightly behind the three older Tigers, Singapore, Hong Kong, and South Korea. Many economic indicators have demonstrated this trend.

In this context, Chinese Taipei's economic competitiveness has declined from 11th in the world in 1992 to 18th in 1996 (Wu, 1996). In spite of this drop, Chinese Taipei has had an average economic growth rate of 6.34% during this same period, a rate higher than most developed economies (Chinese Statistical Association, 1996). Lower rankings have led to some degree of pessimism, and it is thought that Chinese Taipei's economic development must be enhanced, especially if it is to compete successfully with other newly developing economies. In this climate of economic aggressiveness, adult education and lifelong learning are viewed as critical instruments for enhancing economic development through workforce upgrading, including professional education.

Social Dimension

Chinese Taipei society has developed into a postmodern era (Jarvis, 1996). In this context, there are more diverse needs arising from a variety of sources. With advances in medical science and an increase in living standards, the life expectancy of people in Chinese Taipei is now 75 years of age (Ministry of the Interior, 1996). As of 1994, people over the age of 65 constituted more than 7% of the population, making Chinese Taipei an aging society according to the United Nations standards. Additionally, more people are retiring before the official age of 65, and this aging population is demanding more opportunities to learn. Before 1968, when the government extended compulsory education from six to nine years, women had comparatively fewer opportunities to gain an education. This group, now entering middle age, encompasses a high percentage of the illiterate population, and remedial programs are demanded.

These changes have reduced the supply and increased the cost of labour. As a result, employers may, under certain conditions, hire foreign workers. Currently, there are approximately 200,000 foreign workers registered in Chinese Taipei, most of whom come from south east Asia including the Philippines and Thailand. The growing number of foreign workers has increased the importance of adult basic education, particularly with regard to the need for language instruction.

Educational Dimension

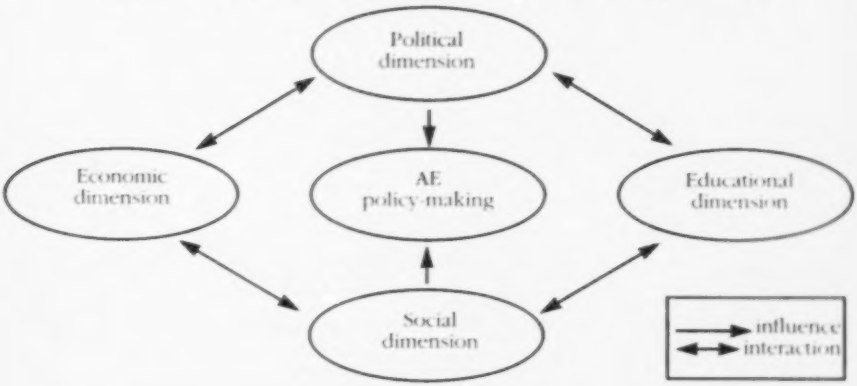
In Chinese Taipei, and elsewhere in the world, education is a valued commodity. However, there have been recent developments which suggest the possibility for

change. Most significantly, the unemployment rate for that portion of the population holding a bachelor's degree and above is higher in Chinese Taipei than is the unemployment rate for those with a lower level of education. Specifically, in February of 1996, the average unemployment rate in Chinese Taipei was 2.1%, while the unemployment rate for those with a bachelor's degree and above was 2.56%. At the same time, the unemployment rate for those holding no more than senior high school certificates was 2.23%, and the unemployment rate for those with only secondary school certificates, or less, was 1.78% (see Directorate-General of Budget, Accounting and Statistics, 1996).

The suggestion that higher education may result in a greater likelihood for unemployment has potentially affected the overall view of higher education in Chinese Taipei. Most young adults now focus on getting a good job as their number one priority. A popular route is in-service education coupled with entry into the labour market as soon as possible. This is then followed by technical updating or part-time enrolment in professional education. In this environment, demand for recurrent education is growing.

Adding to the changes in Chinese Taipei education, starting next fiscal year (1997), each national college and university is responsible for raising 20% of its budget. In order to achieve this target, institutions have been developing extension education activities and expanding extramural education. In the recent past, only private colleges and universities were interested in extension education, now the field is expected to expand greatly, particularly at the higher levels.

Figure 1: Major Influence Resources on AE Policy-making



The Combined Context

As Figure 1 demonstrates, the political, economic, social, and educational contexts, both separately and together, affect adult education and the potential for a lifelong

learning system in Chinese Taipei. Given their influence, they represent important indicators in so far as evaluating policy directions and program outcomes.

A major weakness in the field of adult education within Chinese Taipei is directly the result of little or no productive collaboration between providers, particularly in the mix of statutory, voluntary, and professional institutions. At present, institutions which offer adult education activities are facilitated by the government departments of Education and Social Administration. However, during the last five years many local governments began establishing another variety of educational institution aimed at older learners. These have not, however, filled the gap nor operated in a fashion which draws the field together in order to make a coordinated whole. Some argue that the shortage of professional adult education institutions, operating in a fashion similar to American community colleges, is a fundamental barrier for developing adult education in Chinese Taipei. Resolving this issue is a central concern if adult education is to flower into an integrated system of lifelong learning. On an optimistic note, the government, the academic world, and the public have identified this weakness and discussions are occurring with regard to how institutions should be established and coordinated. These discussions were reflected in part within the Five Year Scheme and the LLDS.

GOVERNMENT'S ADULT EDUCATION POLICIES

The Five Year Scheme was the first planned adult education policy directive in Chinese Taipei. As discussed earlier, prior to 1992, adult education within Chinese Taipei was in its infancy. It was the Five Year Scheme that laid the foundation for an exacting analysis which has the potential to grow into a mature and stable system of adult education practices, and then into a lifelong learning system. In this section of the paper, the Five Year Scheme and the LLDS are discussed in detail. In addition, though the WCC is for the most part a cultural policy, its influence on education will be discussed. It is important to develop this discussion with the understanding that these three schemes are national policies.

Five Year Scheme

The Five Year Scheme was conducted from July 1992 through June 1996 (Ministry of Education, 1991). Since the Five Year Scheme was the first systematic policy package for adult education, it reviewed, in depth, past practices as these related to adult education. With a budget exceeding US$132 million, the goal of the scheme was to give adult education in Chinese Taipei a new life (Ministry of Education, 1991). In terms of the overall education budget, this was a large project, suggesting that the government was very serious about promoting, developing and improving adult education in Chinese Taipei.

The ten domains of the scheme included the following: a) researching and assessing adult education; b) enacting the Adult Education Act and ratifying the Supplementary Laws; c) establishing adult education institutes and enhancing equipment, facilities, and staff; d) coordinating the relevant government departments, schools, social education institutions, research institutions, public and private enterprises, foundations, and professional associations which offer adult education;

e) cultivating adult educators by providing in-service education in order to improve teaching methods; f) developing and improving curriculum and learning materials; g) planning the use of television, broadcasting, newspapers, books, and magazines for adult education; h) enhancing the promotion of adult education; i) reinforcing adult education for disadvantaged groups within the population; and j) evaluating the effectiveness of adult education.

A major needs assessment and the establishment of professional institutions were the key directions in the Five Year Scheme. In order to evaluate demand, and use this as the basis for program development, the government commissioned a number of research studies from adult education specialists. These were conducted in different counties and cities throughout Chinese Taipei in order to look for variations and realize a comprehensive overview. Ten research projects were completed, and the results did reveal some differences in local demand. However, it was the shortage of professional adult education institutions that was found to be the major weakness throughout Chinese Taipei.

To date, four research centres and two graduate institutes respond to the demand for professional adult education — not nearly enough. Discussions continue with regard to what sorts of institutions and structures would be most helpful in order to enhance the current structure. Community colleges, which could be created from Social Education Institutes, provide one practical possibility. In addition, the two metropolises, Taipei and Kaohsiung, plan to establish open universities in order to provide lifelong learning opportunities for their citizens. Given the lack of professional institutions, and the fact that adult education programming is offered by so many sectors, the need to coordinate activities was also stressed in the scheme.

During the Five Year Scheme, the government played a major role in developing and improving adult education. Significant contributions from the Five Year Scheme included the generous funding, the universal needs assessment, the development of institutes within universities, and the marketing of adult education. During the scheme and after, adult education has been developing, albeit gradually, and a solid foundation has been established. Weaknesses at this stage include the speed at which programming is being developed — not fast enough — and the fact that many of the principles of adult education have yet to be incorporated into the programming.

Lifelong Learning Oriented Middle Stage Adult Education Development Scheme

The LLDS began in July 1996, and is intended to replace the Five Year Scheme. Whereas the Five Year Scheme can be viewed as the foundation for adult education and lifelong learning in Chinese Taipei, the LLDS focuses more on programming and implementation. The focus of the LLDS is the unravelling of the essence of adult education in order to bring forth the flower of lifelong learning. LLDS identifies lifelong learning as the aim of adult education in this second stage.

In terms of the domains, the similarities between the LLDS and the Five Year Scheme are obvious. The ten domains of the LLDS (Ministry of Education, 1996) include the following: a) continuing the program of the Five Year Scheme; b) enact-

ing relevant legislation to establish an adult education system; c) creating new adult education institutions; d) establishing a system for employing and cultivating adult education professionals; e) encouraging current institutions to offer adult education programming, and coordinating and integrating these efforts; f) enhancing curricula, programming and teaching methods; g) linking media resources and the community in order to develop adult education; h) promoting lifelong learning and building the information networks for learning; i) developing lifelong learning for disadvantaged adults; and j) conducting research and evaluation. With the exception of the explicit inclusion of and emphasis on lifelong learning, the domains are quite similar to those in the Five Year Scheme. Domain "g" is particularly significant. It advocates the promotion of community adult learning activities through the incorporation of strategies such as organising study circles under the support and guidance of local schools. This is the first domain to employ concrete strategies for programming.

At this writing, the LLDS is scheduled to be in effect for almost another five years. Its budget comes from the Ministry of Education, but is not as large as was the case with the Five Year Scheme. This could become its chief shortcoming. Optimistically, however, the explicit development and incorporation of lifelong learning is encouraging. Clearly, the definitive goal is the creation of a learning society imbued with a comprehensive and integrated lifelong learning system.

The Whole Construction of Community

In essence, the WCC is a cultural policy package not an educational one. However, it is closely related to adult education, and has important contributions to make to this cause. As the Vice-Chair of the Council for Cultural Affairs, Dr. Chen Chi-Nan said, "The purpose of the WCC is to set up a systematic learning society and a learning community" (Chen, 1996). Given this mandate, it is easy to see the relationship to the Five Year Scheme and the LLDS. As many researchers have noted, adult education can assist in the construction of an educative community or learning society (Brookfield, 1983; Fasheh, 1995; Knowles, 1980). The WCC has a slogan: "Culturalisation of industry and industrialisation of culture".

With the full support of President Lee, and coupled with good timing, the WCC has aroused the public's consciousness of community through diverse activities. From 1994 onward, WCC has been a popular term. Currently, it enjoys a high level of popularity and can be reasonably described as a social movement in present day Chinese Taipei.

The WCC has paid attention to the possible contributions of primary and secondary schools to the community, but lacks a professional perspective and expertise with regard to adult education. From the WCC viewpoint, local schools can participate in community construction through a variety of approaches (Architecture and City-Country Research and Development Foundation of Taiwan University, 1995): a) by assisting the community to develop a community culture; b) by establishing grassroots education in the schools; c) by cooperating with and supporting community development projects; d) by increasing the involvement of parents' associations; and e) by providing resources for community activities. These

approaches for involving schools in community construction are a starting point, but the overall potential is yet to be developed. And although some of the key people, such as Dr. Chen, understand the significance of adult education, the WCC's contribution to adult education is likely to remain limited. In part this is because the WCC lacks knowledge of adult education and lifelong learning opportunities and potential. What is needed is for the WCC to draw more attention to adult education programming. This will not only advantage WCC goals, but will also advance the development of adult education. There will be a win-win effect for adult education, lifelong learning, and the WCC.

IMPROVING ADULT EDUCATION THROUGH POLICY FORMATION

Adult education policy-making directly influences the implementation and administration of programming, and in this regard is critical for the contextual development of lifelong learning. Thus, what adult education and lifelong learning will be, is very dependent on the nature of policy-making at this stage of educational reform. It is for this reason that Clyne (1993) notes adult education policy as the central task of public policy. Naturally, therefore, the public's interest in this will be correspondingly high. The two prime policy packages, the Five Year Scheme and LLDS in Chinese Taipei, are basically aimed at raising the standards of adult education and then lifelong learning. These two policy packages represent the precursor for a systematic approach to lifelong learning. By closely analyzing the needs that arise from various applications, and projecting future directions, educational authorities in Chinese Taipei's central government can adjust adult education policy-making in order to ensure it applies to the broader and more integrated context of lifelong learning. This approach could also be used by other APEC economies. However, the following elements should be considered.

Bridging the Gap Between Policy and Practice

Policy is created from past practice and is refined with a view towards implementation in the current context. How to effectively link policy with current practice and build from that point forward is the major challenge for policy makers. To satisfy demand in the world of adult education, policy makers have to bridge the gap between policy and practice by being consistent and realistic. One useful approach for bridging this gap is to develop a precise and universal needs assessment tool. The focus of needs assessment should not only be to determine present demands, but also to reveal future trends. Horizontal and longitudinal analyses are required.

After reviewing the results of the Five Year Scheme, the LLDS needs to put forth a more concerted effort for assessing the direction in which adult education is moving. Although needs assessment was one of the domains of both schemes, but by no means a prominent one, it is a necessity. In fact, when the Five Year Scheme was finished, a multiple-dimensional needs assessment should have been undertaken prior to beginning the LLDS.

The success of any needs assessment depends for the most part on a bottom-up procedure instead of the more common top-down approach. Specifically, with regard to adult education and lifelong learning, a grassroots examination is required,

and this should incorporate a field study approach conducted in the context of the community. In this way, the needs assessment can bridge the gap and provide for the development of realistic and viable linkages between policy and practice.

Increasing Multiple Participation in Policy-making

Multiple participation in adult education policy-making is a common characteristic, as is diversity in terms of providers. Government and non-government sectors, as well as profit and not-for-profit organisations, serve adult education. When developing adult education policy, policy makers need to listen to the different voices. Beyond participants and providers, adult education policy links to other government departments, including social, labour, culture and communications. This demands multiple participation.

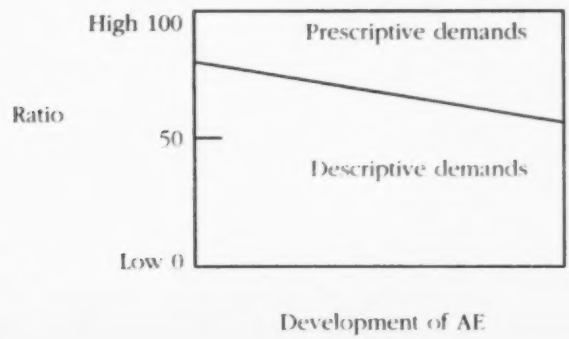
The formation of the Five Year Scheme and the LLDS was commissioned by the Ministry of Education in conjunction with committees composed of various academics from different fields. Although the committees did invite opinions from different groups when schemes were being developed, the interaction between committees and outsiders was insufficient. In fact, the committees did not gather enough cogent material from the real world to draw practical conclusions that will lead to the most effective and efficient policy. Multiple participation can help resolve this sort of problem by gathering data from all sectors.

Balancing Descriptive and Prescriptive Demands

The development of adult education encompasses practical and ideal dimensions to meet both descriptive and prescriptive demands. If adult education policy merely meets the descriptive demands, it cannot reflect the needs of the future. In contrast, if adult education policy only stresses future needs, it will enlarge the gap between policy and practice and hinder the process of implementation. Therefore, as Brookfield (1983) has shown, adult education has different paradigms to meet the different needs.

Balancing the descriptive and prescriptive demands is difficult for policy makers.

Figure 2: The Distribution of AE Policy-making



Data collection through multiple participation is mostly descriptive, so policy makers must supplement this by considering future developments and theoretical analyses. Balancing descriptive and prescriptive needs in adult education policy is not a matter of weighing each equally. Distribution must reflect developmental and immediate, theoretical and practical, and present and future needs. A suitable approach for adult education policy makers is to divide the distribution of bilateral demands into different stages based on the development of adult education. As shown in Figure 2, when adult education is in its infancy, policy makers can place more emphasis on policy that meets descriptive demands and encourages motivation. As programming grows and prospers, prescriptive policy will increase in ratio until descriptive and prescriptive demands are roughly balanced.

Improving Evaluation

Ongoing, multiple evaluation is a key strategy for improving the quality of adult education policy. The chief purpose of evaluation is to ensure improvement continues and is consistent. To achieve this, adult education policy makers must conduct evaluations not only at the end of the policy implementation period, but also at the beginning and throughout the process. In other words, adult education policy must include formative and summative evaluation. The former is useful during the process, and the latter at the end.

Multiple evaluation implies that adult education policy requires inter-departmental and intra-departmental evaluation. In terms of Chinese Taipei's adult education policy, evaluation is not only carried out by the Ministry of Education, but also by other government departments, private organisations, and even the public. As well as evaluators from the Ministry of Education, there are others from outside the Ministry who bring a variety of perspectives. In general, insiders are apt to have blind points about their own activities, while outsiders often have more objective observations.

Evaluation of development and research was one of the domains in the Five Year Scheme and the LLDS. However, in actual practice, it is difficult to locate examples of multiple evaluation in these policy packages. There was some inter-departmental evaluation in the Ministry of Education, but it appears to have lacked a continuing, systematic, and multiple approach. Lack of evaluation blinds the results, and this negatively influences effectiveness. Adult education policy makers need to entrench continuing multiple evaluation in order to pave the way for effective policy formation.

FROM ADULT EDUCATION TO LIFELONG LEARNING

The period during which adult education has the potential to affect and influence individuals occupies the largest part of their lives. For most citizens, this occurs from about the age of 18 onwards. Those who immediately enter higher education extend their "youth" schooling for a few years, but become candidates for adult education shortly thereafter. Given the increasing lifespans of the population in Chinese Taipei, there is an ever-growing need and demand for adult education opportunities, in both the formal and non-formal sectors.

A Learning Society

The creation of a fully developed and completely integrated learning society in Chinese Taipei is the goal described as lifelong learning. This vision of the learning society, as Hutchins (1968) concluded, is one of fulfillment. It is a world community, civilised and humane. Jarvis (1995, p. 40) described this learning society as needing to be acknowledged, learner-based, having no access barriers, and providing multifaceted, lifelong opportunities. It is a society organised in such a manner that all learning opportunities are available to everyone on a full- or part-time basis. Thus, a true learning society is one where the right to learn is protected, and everyone can continue learning for whatever reasons they choose, by various means, with abundant resources and complete flexibility.

Given Chinese Taipei's need to compete in the global marketplace, the establishment of a learning society is quite clearly an important tactic. The Council of Educational Reform and Consultancy, created two years ago with the intention of developing a comprehensive examination of the total education system, has recommended focusing on the creation of a lifelong learning society. The Council for Cultural Affairs has also called for the restoration of an old concept, the "Society of bookishness". Cultivating local leaders who will establish study circles in the communities is a first step towards implementation. However, as Van der Zee (1991) has pointed out, there is a growing regional and perhaps even world-wide consensus that all reform in education should focus on the goal of creating a learning society.

Other Economies and Lifelong Learning

International trends with regard to lifelong learning are also increasingly obvious and common. For example, 1996 was the European Year of Lifelong Learning, a measure designed to highlight awareness and the importance of learning through the lifespan. A variety of activities in the 12 member European Union helped to target a learning society as a central goal. Objectives for the year included: a) encouraging acquisition of new knowledge; b) bringing schools and the business sectors closer together; c) combatting exclusion from education; d) promoting proficiency in three community languages; and e) treating capital investment and investment in training on an equal basis (Cresson, 1996, p. 217).

The American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE) also has a lifelong learning vision. Recently, it emphasized that "all communities will have access to Lifelong Learning facilities where adults can plan career objectives and receive counselling and educational services as needed" (AAACE, 1996, p. 23). AAACE also stressed the importance of adult education and lifelong learning for the United States in the coming century.

As is the case in Chinese Taipei, most APEC economies, particularly in East and Southeast Asia, have pent-up demand for lifelong learning, not only to support continuing economic growth but also for resolving social and cultural issues. Lifelong learning needs to be on government policy agendas, and perhaps even at the top of the list. This need is amplified by the fact that other areas in the world are stressing the importance of lifelong learning, and pressing it into practice. APEC member

economies, particularly those in Asia, cannot hesitate to follow the global example. Although economic performance for many APEC economies in Asia is excellent, there are fundamental problems which could threaten economic security. Included are the relatively late development of high technology and advanced manufacturing techniques, illiteracy, the widening gap between the rich and the poor, and increasing social and psychological problems resulting from rapid changes taking place in society. Although lifelong learning is not the only instrument for addressing these problems, it is one of the major strategies for achieving prolonged social stability and economic growth in APEC economies. Thus, it is time for APEC economies to enhance lifelong learning not only to create significant domestic benefits but also to build for economic success in the increasingly competitive global market.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In the experience of Chinese Taipei, the multiple contexts of the political, economic, social, and educational dimensions provide a strong foundation for understanding the development of adult education and lifelong learning policy and practices. Policy packages such as the Five Year Scheme and the LLDS have to some degree responded to the demands initiated by different sectors of Chinese Taipei society, but there is still much work to do.

Policy development is critically important, and it must be a focus for the government and all other stakeholders. Adult education and lifelong learning policy must be reviewed continuously and extensively in order to maximize potential. This paper has analyzed the background and contexts for developing and improving adult education in Chinese Taipei, extensively reviewed two policy packages which have influenced adult education during the past five years, and explored relevant cultural policy. Following this analysis, the paper identified four strategies to strengthen adult education, with specific regard to policy-making.

Given that adult education is the major element in the development of an integrated system of lifelong learning, it must be supported by sound, rational and productive policies. Adult education policy-making, therefore, is central to fulfilling the promise of lifelong learning, and the strategies developed in this paper may be used to stimulate other APEC members as they advance the deployment of lifelong learning in their own economies.

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